WASHTENAW COUNTY HISTORICAL SOCIETY - Founded December 17, 1857 FEBRUARY 1979

WASHTENAW IMPRESSIONS

PRESIDENT'S CORNER

The campaign for funds for construction of the next part of the Society's museum is now underway. Glenn Richards, Grenzebach's representative here for the program, has completed the preliminary part of the business. The Board of Directors of the Society is now being solicited. Other parts of the program will follow and by summertime it is hoped that the campaign will have been completed and will have been successful.

Work in the powerhouse will be resumed in the spring. Photographs are being taken of some of the valuable artifacts stored at Willow Run and other places. These pictures will be used during the campaign as evidence of our need for a county museum where the county history can tie together and enhance the history now available through the excellent smaller local museums.

Much planning needs to be done on the organization and management of the museum. The advice and support of all members of the Society will be needed to prevent the museum from becoming an "attic" for showing discarded objects. It is our hope that it will become a live teaching center for history of this part of the state.

—Leigh Anderson

HAVE YOU RENEWED YOUR MEMBERSHIP?

Thanks to all who have renewed their memberships. If you haven't yet, please send dues to: WCHS, P.O. Box 8006, Ann Arbor, MI 48107.

The dues are: individual, $5, couple $9; senior individual, $4, senior couple, $7. Deduct $1 if already a member of a local society in the county. Life membership is $100, $150 for a couple.

MARTIN LEE TO TELL HOW CITY'S OLD WEST SIDE GOT TO BE HISTORIC DISTRICT AT WCHS MEETING

Martin Lee, past-president of Ann Arbor's Old West Side Association, will discuss "The History of the Old West Side Historic District Ordinance" at 8 p.m. Thursday, February 22, at the WCHS meeting at Liberty Hall in Great Lakes Federal Savings, Liberty at Division Streets.

Lee, a native of Britain, graduated from Bristol University and came to the United States in 1969. He earned a master's degree from Michigan State University and is "close to" a U-M doctoral degree in transportation research.

He became involved with the Old West Side in 1975 and helped get the ordinance adopted. He lives there and serves on the board although he is now director of research in the Michigan Secretary of State's office in Lansing.

NAMESAKE OF FIRST WHS PRESIDENT IN COUNTY

When Hazel Proctor, museum committee chairman, was invited recently by the Dexter Historical Society to talk about the proposed museum she met the great-grandson and namesake of the first president of the Washtenaw Historical Society—Munnis Kenny.

The present Munnis Kenny now lives on Webster Church Road near the farm his great-grandfather took up from the government in 1828. A World War I veteran, he worked 35 years at the Dexter Bank, retiring shortly after the merger with Ann Arbor Bank as vice-president.

His great-grandfather, a lawyer, served in the Territorial Legislature.

HOME SHOW AUCTION, GATE TO BENEFIT MUSEUM FUND

The WCHS museum fund will get a boost at the Ann Arbor Home and Leisure Living Show at the U-M Track and Tennis Building on Ferry Field with a special auction at 6 p.m. Friday, March 23.

Pat and John Danovich, show promoters, say eighty-five or more businesses plan to donate items and Auctioneers Braun and Helmer are donating their services. Gate receipts from the 4 p.m. opening to 6 p.m. are also being donated by the Danoviches as well as a booth for WCHS.

Other auction donations may be made by telephoning 769-2084. Also if you can help at the booth, please call President Leigh Anderson, 663-2128. There are free passes and parking for helpers.

MUSEUM PROJECT MOVING, ADMINISTRATOR NAMED

The WCHS museum project is moving ahead in several ways, Chairman Hazel Proctor said. She is to speak at Rotary and Exchange Clubs soon and welcomes other invitations to talk about the proposed museum.

MS. COLLIE

Rosalie M. Collie will be administrator of the $750,000 building fund drive. Dr. Robert M. Warner, director of Bentley Historical Library and Frank Wilhelme, executive secretary of the Historical Society of Michigan, have given helpful advice.

The committee will soon ask board approval of preliminary drawings. Ken Haist, a GLFS vice-president in charge of commercial loans, will work with the architect overseeing construction.

OLD SOURCES ANSWER NEW QUESTIONS

LOCAL HISTORY BOOMING AT BENTLEY

Collecting historical materials about the state and University of Michigan can have unexpected implications the Bentley Historical Library staff has found.

A Russian researcher from MSU—Moscow State University—and his mysterious companion came to use the library on the U-M North Campus. A Michigan Congressman started depositing his papers there and through an unprecedented series of events the Gerald R. Ford Presidential Library is under construction next door.

Those are a couple of implications mentioned by Dr. Robert M. Warner, director, and Mary Jo Pugh, reference archivist, in a dialogue at the WCHS January meeting at the library.

The Michigan Historical Collections, started in 1935, has been housed in Bentley Library since it was completed in 1973. It was named for the late Alvin Bentley who had the dubious distinction of being the only Congressman ever gunned down on the floor of the House of Representatives. He recovered and later was a U-M Regent. His widow donated half the funds to build it.

In collecting state and U-M history, "we have developed other themes that carry us far beyond Ann Arbor," Dr. Warner said. "We have wonderful material on the Philippines, for example, because of Mrs. Hayden's husband's papers and others, also on conservation and temperance and prohibition."

"We have assembled an enormous resource on Washtenaw County. I think probably Ann Arbor is the best documented community in the state and this society has played a very important role in that," he said.

"We have approximately 22 million manuscripts, a little over 30,000 volumes and 250,000 photographs," he said.

"Users come from all over the world," Miss Pugh said. "You never know who's going to walk in the door and what questions they're going to ask.

"I think one of the most interesting came from Turkey. A woman read that there was supposed to be a Dervish eating place in Taylor, Michigan, established in the 1920's, and she wanted to know if it was still there.

"I never did find the answer. I called every Arab-sounding group I could think of in Taylor and Detroit.

"One of the other questions that we get often—in letters on yellow sheets of paper, hand printed, 'Please send me all the information you have on Michigan Indians. I need it for Friday'.

"About 54 percent of our users come from the U-M. We serve as a laboratory for many history classes, also library science, landscape architecture, journalism and other departments.

"About 20 percent come from other academic institutions—last year we had 24 Michigan and 45 non-Michigan universities represented from Louisiana to Maine to California to Washington and 13 foreign institutions.

"People came from Scotland, Japan and Australia, many to use the Philippines collection," she continued. "Another 15 percent, not affiliated with academic institutions, are interested in a variety of local history and preservation projects. The last ten percent are genealogists."

"You can learn a lot about society's interests and values in the kinds of things they are studying," Dr. Warner noted. "When I started (25 years ago) political and military history were very high priority items. Local history is very interesting now."

"Academic departments of history may have declining enrollments," Miss Pugh said, "but in terms of public uses of history at the grass roots level, we have seen an extraordinary increase."

"Historic preservation is an example. It is now a matter of public policy to revitalize downtown areas. People are restoring older homes and want to know how to do it right.

"Academic historians are interested in the impact of electricity on family structure. Sociologists are looking at how use of the front porch has changed—at how Americans seem to be oriented to their backyards. Another spin-off is land-use planning. Two Eastern Michigan University geographers are working on the development of the Huron River Valley. The Washtenaw County Drain Commission has been out here to see where old watercourses went on old maps. Landscape architects have been planning landscaping for historic sites—such as Cobblestone Farm.

"All kinds of social historians are out here," she continued. "One is studying the relationship of poverty and the law in mid-nineteenth century. She's looking at welfare, census and justice of the peace records. We have a person working on delivery of health care from about 1880 to 1920 as it became professionalized. We have another study on death—a brand new area of study. A young woman worked on the emergence of women schoolteachers in Washtenaw County from 1830-1860."

In response to a question, she said the Russian was working on the labor movement and the New Deal. He used the Frank Murphy papers and Senator Arthur Vandenberg papers in relation to US-Soviet relations in World War II.

"He really wasn't looking for this but was tickled to find letters exchanged between the distinguished Russian scientist

Pavlov and John Harvey Kellogg of Battle Creek," Dr. Warner noted.

We have the Washtenaw County census for 1850. Many use the census to trace genealogy, she noted, but with computers and statistical methods demographers and social historians can use these records in new ways—such as for social mobility studies.

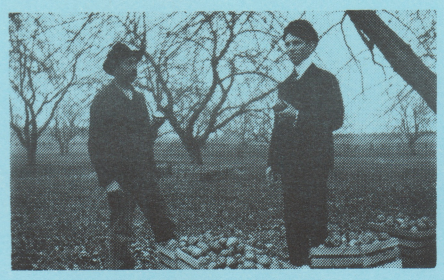
Censuses before 1850 gave you just the head count, she said. The 1850 and later censuses were much more detailed, she explained. They include the name of every person in the family, age, sex, race, occupation of males, value of real estate owned, place of birth, and whether the person attended school during the year.

There were also detailed schedules for agriculture and industry listing numbers of animals and amounts of crops grown. People doing land use studies can match these up with maps and see what kinds of agriculture was being done at different times. For each industry, it tells the product made, materials used, numbers of men and women employed and average wages of each. Those interested in women's history can see what industries women moved into first and get some idea of wage differentials.

Women's history is a very big topic right now, Dr. Warner noted. By the way, Ann Arbor has one of the best computer-produced archives in the country at the U-M Institute for Social Research, he added.

Among their Washtenaw County records are the records of the superintendents of the poor for the 1850's—the first welfare.

"I noticed on April 5, 1850, the board took an assignment of the property of Mrs. Maria Bailey for compensation for her maintenance. They proceeded to 'bind' children left destitute, for example, 'May Brown, female pauper aged seven, bound last November to Charles Adams of Scio until she arrives at age 18' and 'John Dunn, male pauper age 12, to F. D. Wilson of Ypsilanti to the trade of farming until he arrives at age 21'.



Courtesy of Michigan Historical Collections, Bentley Library, U-M

Ella Fuller Photo

This picture from a glass negative was taken by an Augusta township farm wife in the early 1900's.

"Recently we've gotten the earliest minutes of the village of Ann Arbor from 1834, some in Founder John Allen's own hand, she said. The book was found in a barn in Dexter.

"Some ordinances sound very familiar today," she noted, "for example, an ordinance on dogs. There's an ordinance on running horses and selling liquors. If you run a horse through town you are liable to a $10 fine and you can't sell liquor without a license.

"Finding of this book points up the fact," Dr. Warner said, "there are still hidden treasures around."

Other records shown were justice of the peace records for the 1850's, church and business records, an 1831 letter about life in Ann Arbor, John Allen's original plat of Ann Arbor and some photograph collections of Ella Fuller, and Bach and Allmendinger family albums.

In Saline Presbyterian Church records, "Brethren Gregory and Wood visited Julia Moore, could not get her to see her sin in the violation of the Sabbath, would make no confession to wipe away the sting and reproach brought upon religion." The church voted to suspend her until she repented.

E. W. Morgan apparently developed his own credit rating system in the 1840's and 1850's. It is part of the archive of the Hicks family who were very active members of the Society.

Morgan was very candid, Miss Pugh noted. Of Christian Eberbach & Co. he said, "Sells for cash only. Has capital of $1,500. Is thoroughly educated as a chemist and apothecary in Germany. Has been for several years a clerk in Philadelphia and Ann Arbor. He is a very prescient, economical, industrious man." He goes on to predict great things for him.

Of George Hill who did have a very checkered career, Morgan said he was "a perfect riddle and a difficult one to guess." Hill built a local opera house, Hill Street was named after him, he was secretary of Dakota Territory but he died a drunkard in Detroit, it was noted.

Morgan commented on three women, all milliners.

This document is unique, Dr. Warner said. Other archivists have not heard of one like it.

One of our prize possessions, Miss Pugh continued, is a letter from Lucy Stowe Morgan to her family in Connecticut about her marriage and life in Ann Arbor in 1831. She used every scrap of paper. She listed every item of furniture and goods in her house. She sketched a map of Jacksonburgh (Jackson) where she successfully speculated in real estate.

Mrs. Morgan writes about the young women who visit and marry here, urges a female relative to come and be company for her and says there is "still an abundance of old bachelors left."

In the past historians often used pictures as an afterthought, Miss Pugh said. "But with new kinds of questions people are asking about architecture, landscaping and material culture, they are being used as primary sources.

"Some of you may have seen the article about the Ella Fuller photograph collection in the January *Chronicle* of the Historical Society of Michigan. The pictures were taken near Ypsilanti around the turn of the century. Mrs. Fuller shows aspects of life that are seldom documented in photographs. The article by May Davis Hill (curator of photographic

materials at Bentley) is a good example of how photos can illuminate our understanding of family and farm life."

Asked if they had planned on Congressman Ford becoming president, Dr. Warner recalled when they were moving into the building someone made a bad joke. "Gee, wouldn't it be interesting if Mr. Agnew would resign and Mr. Nixon would appoint Gerald Ford vice-president and we'd have a vice-presidential collection." We speculated further, "Yes, and what if something happened to Mr. Nixon and he got to be president." All of us laughed at this unlikely series of events.

COBBLESTONE FARM WILL OBSERVE FOUNDER'S DAY

Cobblestone Farm Association will celebrate founder's day beginning with dessert at 6:30 p.m. Friday, February 23, at St. Andrew's Episcopal Church hall, 306 N. Division Street.

Ted Heusel of Radio Station WPAG will be master of ceremonies and Sy Murray, city administrator, will give opening remarks at the awards program, honoring volunteers. The Cobblestone Country Dancers will perform nineteenth century dances. It is open to the public but reservations are required. For reservations call Adrienne Malley, 662-2620. At 8:30 a public country dance party will begin.

HISTORICAL HAPPENINGS

Chelsea Historical Society—8 p.m. second Monday of month at McKune Memorial Library.

Dexter Historical Society—Sixth annual pioneer arts and crafts fair, 10 a.m. to 5 p.m. Saturday, March 17, at Dexter High School. More than 50 artists and craftsmen are to demonstrate their arts including fraktaring (fancy lettering) and theorem (stenciling on velvet).

Luncheon will be available, served by the Heritage Guild. Donation at the door is $1 for adults and 50 cents for high schoolers. All proceeds benefit the museum.

Manchester Historical Society—8 p.m. Monday, February 26, at the Methodist Church. The report of the Manchester Historical District architecture survey last summer by Michigan State University students is to be presented. The speaker, Phil Grillo, was unable to be there last month as planned.

WYSTAN STEVENS TO SHOW 'TOMBSTONE TREASURY'

Wystan Stevens, Ann Arbor historian, will present a slide show, "Washtenaw County Tombstone Treasury" at the Genealogy Society of Washtenaw County meeting at 2:30 p.m. Sunday, February 25, at Washtenaw Community College. Help session begins at 1 p.m.

Printing and Production: Courtesy of Great Lakes Federal Savings and Drury, Lacy, Inc.

Milan Historical Society—7:30 p.m. third Wednesday of month at Milan Community House.

Saline Historical Society—Marti Fischer, interior designer of Saline, will discuss "Fresh Ideas on Decorating the Older Home" at 8:30 p.m. Tuesday, February 20, in the high school library. Business meeting begins at 8. The program was postponed from January because of icy roads.

Ypsilanti Historical Society—Membership meetings are scheduled from 3-5 p.m. Sundays February 18 and March 18 at the museum, 220 W. Huron Street.

"Victorian Costuming: What Milady Wore Morning, Noon and Night" will be Ruth Reynold's topic at the February meeting. She has charge of the museum's clothing collection and will use examples from it.

In March the "Sweet Adeline" singing group will sing early American songs and then lead a sing-along.

HERBERT CORNISH HEADS YPSILANTI SOCIETY

Herbert Cornish is the new president of the Ypsilanti Historical Society and William Riccobono is vice-president. Dorothy Disbrow will continue as secretary and archivist and Fred Peters as treasurer.

New board members are Rene Burgess and Stanley Harbison. Carl Scheffler is finance chairman.

WASHTENAW COUNTY HISTORICAL SOCIETY MEETING

8:00 p.m. THURSDAY

FEBRUARY 22, 1979
Liberty Hall

Great Lakes Federal Savings
Liberty at Division
Ann Arbor, Michigan

Non-Profit Org.
U.S. Postage
PAID
Permit No. 96
Ann Arbor, Mich.

Miss Ella Hymans,
1200 Earhart Road,
Ann Arbor, Mi. 48105